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Claims 1 through 33 are pending in this application.

1. On 14 April 2003, the Examiner telephoned to impose a requirement for restriction under 35USC§121 and 37CFR§1.141, which requires the election among the following groups for examination on the merits:

- Group I, a tension mask defined by claims 1-24;
- Group II, a method of making a tension mask covered by claims 25-29; and
- Group III, an exposure mask covered by claims 30-33.

2. On 16 April 2003, in response to the Requirement for Restriction, requiring the Applicant to elect between Groups I, II, and III, the Applicant provisionally elected Group I (claims 1-24) with traverse.

3. As specifically stated in MPEP § 803, the examiner must show that the (A) The inventions must be independent (see MPEP § 802.01, § 806.04, § 808.01) or distinct as claimed (see MPEP §806.05 - §806.05(i)); and (B) There must be a serious burden on the examiner if restriction is required (see MPEP §803.02, § 806.04(a) -§806.04(i),§808.01(a), and § 808.02).

4. We ask that the examiner show that the inventions are independent or distinct as claimed according to MPEP §803.

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5. We also ask the Examiner to show that there is a serious burden on the Examiner according to MPEP §803.

As stipulated in *MPEP* §803, if the search can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits even if there are separate and distinct inventions.

It is respectfully submitted that there would not be a serious burden upon the examiner.

First there are limitations in common in each of the groups as seen in claims 1 through 33.

Secondly, there are some overlapping fields of search within the different groups.

Therefore, since there would be no serious burden on the Examiner and as required by *MPEP* §803, the Examiner must examine the entire application on the merits.


Further, the Applicant respectfully submits that the restriction requirement should be removed.

In view of the foregoing Response, this application is believed to be in condition for examination. Should questions arise during examination, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's attorney.

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No fee is incurred by this Response.

Respectfully submitted,



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